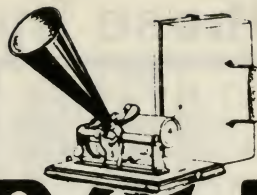


The HILLANDALE News



JUNE 1981

No. 120

BLANKENSTEIN'S

LIMITED.

The Largest Gramophone
... Agents in England ...

For a Limited Number of Days.

**ASTOUNDING
.. OFFER. . .**

**The "MARVEL"
Machine.**

Fitted with Genuine Exhibition Sound Box. (under license from the Gramophone Company), the Zonophone Gibson Taper Arm of latest pattern, richly nickelled. Handsome Flower Horn, 22in. Very easy running silent Motor. 10in. Turntable. Nickel Brake and Timing Screw. Will play Two 10in. Records. In richly polished Oak Cabinet, British made and fitted.

**A Full Size
Concert Machine.**



55/-

P.O. or Cheque will insure immediate Delivery.

This unprecedented price is only possible owing to the enormous purchases we have made of this machine, and we offer it to the public to introduce our system of Record. Supply in Gramophone, Zonophone and Twin make. These are the finest Records in the world, and we carry the largest stock known in them. See advertisement page 304 for general terms.

"If those lips could only speak"



COLUMBIA

**DISC
RECORDS**

A particularly timely number is the Columbia 10-in. Disc of this striking sentimental song, which bids fair to attain unprecedented popularity—and the Record is a splendid one.



The singer is George Platt, the famous North of England baritone 26,160 is the number. Don't fail to get it or you'll be missing some thing particularly good. Complete November list post free from

THE COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, Gen'l,

Room A2, 64 & 66, Oxford Street, London, W.

GLASGOW.

CARDIFF.

MANCHESTER.

SYDNEY, N.S.W.



Edchat

I am not sure at what time in the month of June this magazine will be reaching you, except that it may be later than I could wish, for I have not been able to get it off to the printers in time for the 1st of the month publication at which we aim. Please accept my apologies, and rest assured that I will try and do better next time. This column appears at the beginning of the magazine, and you might perhaps assume that it is the first to be typed, but in fact it is usually the last, and on this occasion everything else is ready and the pages numbered - but I have not been able to think of anything much to chat about. Maybe that is just as well, for the call to fill a particular column willy-nilly does tend to encourage waffle that cannot be of any interest to anyone.

Perhaps I can take the opportunity to repeat some suggestions that have been made before, but which would seem to need emphasising again from time to time; for example, if you should be so unfortunate as to receive a faulty copy of the magazine, or even not receive one at all when you should have, it is the magazine despatcher to whom you should apply, not the Editor. I mention this now because the magazine despatch has recently changed hands, and is now looked after by Dave Roberts - a relief for which, no doubt, John McKeown has expressed much thanks.

What you should send to the Editor is articles or letters for publication in the magazine - if you send them to anyone else, they have to be re-posted, which causes delay and adds to the Society's not inconsiderable postage bill. Sadly, I have a pathological dislike of writing letters in what little spare time I have, so I do not promise to answer such letters unless they contain a straight question which needs a personal rather than a generalised reply. Often, articles can be considerably enhanced by illustrations, but these are not always easy to find. Photographs complicate the printing of the magazine, which is why I tend to confine them to two pages, but clear black and white prints are usually the best form of illustration unless you can produce good quality line drawings. Transparencies and negatives are not welcome as they cannot be used for direct reproduction, and colour prints are less suitable than black and white, though they can be used if they are of good quality. If you do send diagrams or sketches, incidentally, please do them on plain paper; sometimes people used lined or squared paper which makes it difficult to reproduce without re-drawing.

This month's Cover Illustration shows an advertisement which appeared in June 1909 for a hybrid machine based on Zonophone acoustic parts. Although the Gibson tone-arm is described as being of the 'latest pattern', it appears in fact to be of the old pattern that was at that time being phased out on Zonophone machines proper, in favour of one with a detachable soundbox (the Exhibition as fitted to Zonophones was screwed on) and steel, rather than cast-iron, gimbals at the fat end.

John Hecht's Telephonograph

by Frank Andrews

John Hecht was the father of one of our members, William Hecht, who lives in South Africa. Frank Andrews has compiled the following story from contemporary trade periodicals and from correspondence with William Hecht over the years.

According to his son, John Hecht was in 1898 friendly with Carl Lindström in Berlin, where Lindström had a small engineering workshop. Both he and Hecht were 'apprenticed' into the talking machine industry together¹. Between 1900 and 1904, before he left Germany, Hecht was employed in recording Edison cylinders in Berlin for the international catalogues. (These began once the Edison interests had set up a European branch in Antwerp and, in 1903, had taken over the National Phonograph Co. Ltd. of London. The latter company's premises became the European headquarters for Edison products).

But Mr. Hecht, according to his son, had also been employed as a recording engineer for the New Century Records of Waterfield, Clifford and Co. ('The New Century Phonograph Company'), and as this company had failed by the end of 1904 and Mr. Hecht had left them before then, it is unclear as yet whether Hecht was with Edison before New Century or vice versa.²

On the other hand, it was probably in 1903 that the first German Edison cylinder records were taken, there being at least four sessions within the catalogue number series which began at 12000 (with Italian and Spanish recordings by Anton Vargas) before the British entries at 12828. As the British entries had been recorded in the summer and autumn of 1903, the German recordings, with their lower numbers, but reaching to 12827 (including Hebrew) must have been of the same year, and it was probably with these early German recordings (which were sent to America to be master moulded) that John Hecht was at some time engaged. What Hecht did after leaving Germany in 1904 I do not know, except that when the war broke out in 1914, he was in England, and being a German national, he was interned at Alexandra Palace in North London under the Enemy Aliens acts.

I know that he had been living in the Edmonton area in North London, and that he had been recording on cylinders, for his son is in possession of some of the results. These include live recordings of Secular Society meetings, Socialist meetings and the observations of a semi-starved and destitute unemployed worker, who had tramped the streets of Edmonton for weeks past, and was about to leave his wife and children to seek work in far-off Australia. William Hecht dates these recordings at circa 1910 or 1911.

After the war, the Hecht family lived, or continued to live, in Edmonton. The

head of the house continued his interest in talking machines (he had his own laboratory). One day, Lloyd Thomas, a local dealer³, met John Hecht, who was a customer, and learnt that the latter had invented 'an electric telephonic sound magnifier' which he would like to demonstrate to Lloyd Thomas.

The invention, Thomas wrote in a letter to Sound Wave in December 1920, was an eye-opener to himself and his wife. There was no friction, extra scrape or extra wear of the record, and no electric motor was needed. It was capable of being used on phonographs or gramophones and it worked from an accumulator. Some twenty-year-old two-minute Edison cylinders played through the apparatus "simply roared out, the articulation was perfect. The brass was full and powerful; in singing the consonants and vowels were superb. To hear Harry Lauder rolling his "R's" and shovelling his "she's" - well, it was uncanny!"

Lloyd Thomas admitted in his letter that he did not know how Hecht had achieved his results, but he had been told that, if he liked to bring someone else along, Hecht would be delighted to demonstrate his machine, which could be operated in one room or be made to sound in fifty separate rooms from one record. The sounding part could be placed in a button-hole, in a pocket, or one could sit on it; it would still continue to operate. Thomas did not know if it would ever be on sale to the public, but he understood that a rich syndicate was arranging to acquire it and place it on the market.

In January 1921 Thomas wrote again to Sound Wave to say the response to the invitation to hear the invention had been so great that he and Hecht had agreed that appointments to attend demonstrations must be made and at a fee of 5s., as the time spent by them both would be detrimental to their ordinary businesses. Appointments were to be by letter and only special appointments could be made.

Besides demonstrating the Telephonograph, the name given to the invention, Mr. Hecht had a film sound record which could also be inspected. This was a half-inch wide strip of film carrying two sound tracks, to be run alongside a moving photographic film. Applicants for appointments were asked to respond quickly as Mr. Hecht was about to close his agreement with the interested syndicate for the sale of his rights in both inventions.

The February edition of Sound Wave mentioned that a very interesting event took place at Hecht's laboratory in Edmonton when, through Lloyd Thomas, some members of a Gramophone Society attended for a demonstration of the Telephonograph and to interview Mr. Hecht. The visitors were amazed at the great volume of the apparatus when the full power was turned on, at the delicate articulation and at the light $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce weight of the device contacting the record. The 10-ampere-hour battery could operate the machine for 45 hours. The visitors had the ticking of their watches recorded and reproduced, while they waited; the different ticks could be distinguished - the Geneva lever, and the tick of an alarm clock reproduced "it is safe to say, a thousand times larger than the original". One member wanted to hear a recording of a drum. He was duly obliged. Readers of 'Sound Wave' were again

offered the opportunity of being present at further demonstrations by appointment and haste was still urged as Mr. Hecht might be closing his laboratory at any time once business was completed with the syndicate. Thomas had a postscript stating that the wire Hecht was using was little thicker than a human hair.

Nothing was mentioned about the Telephonograph again until September 1921, when it was reported that Hecht, who had recently returned from a business trip, was about to tour the country with his invention, and local managers of theatres and other halls were advised to write for details to Lloyd Thomas at his Edmonton address. Obviously, Hecht had not finalised the deal with the syndicate. In December the 'Edmonton Laboratory of the Edmonton Telephonograph' was said in the 'Sound Wave' to be the Mecca of many eminent men interested in the cult - where cylinders could be made to sound as loud as discs. One visitor was an expert from one of the greatest houses in the business, doubting the claim that the Telephonograph gave the best definition of any instrument then being made. As a test Hecht put on an old announced Edison cylinder of Harry Lauder. On hearing the announcement, the expert is reported to have said, "Oh, that will do, that's enough".

The invention was still for sale, in its entirety, with all its rights and claims, but the inventor did not propose to patent his invention. The appointments book for demonstrations was full until after Christmas.

On May 20th 1922 Hecht gave a public demonstration of his invention at the North Middlesex Military Hospital, to patients and staff. It was said that the audience could hardly believe that they were listening to cylinder records with the sounds coming from a number of horns at the same time. "When they held the receivers in their hands they sang and played right out loud, bold and free. They simply yelled with delight". The heads of staff were amazed and said it was wonderful, very wonderful! They thought it amazing that the instrument could be placed on the lawn and, by means of a cable, a song could be sung in each of the wards at the same time, distinctly and in time. Many of the wounded joined in the songs. The head matron was delighted with the way the instrument sang the beautiful records of Elizabeth Spencer.

After this report, nothing was heard again of the device. It dropped out of the news in 'Sound Wave'. Did anyone buy it and make use of it?

Some years later, Hecht was chief recorder for Metropole and Piccadilly Records at their Hornsey studios and Mr. Carlton was back with Hecht, as General Manager of the studios. If William Hecht should read this article and is inspired to do so, perhaps he could tell us some more of his father's recording activities in this country.

~~~~~  
<sup>1</sup> Lindström sold the business to Max Strauss and his confreres in 1907; they founded Carl Lindström A. G.

<sup>2</sup> As Mr. Hecht Jr. has the impression that this business was circa 1910, possibly it was not the 1901-4 company with which Hecht was associated, although that firm did announce a new process of recording in 1903.

<sup>3</sup> For many years, he advertised his premises as 'The Talkeries', 'The Anythingeries' or 'The Usefulleries'.



Sep. 1908

THE SOUND WAVE AND TALKING MACHINE RECORD.

# "PRINCE" GRAPH-o-phone.



ALUMINIUM TONE-ARM.

CONCERT SOUND-BOX, exactly the same as the highest priced models.

FLOWER HORN that swings freely in all directions.

SPLENDID SPRING MOTOR, runs two records.

SOLID OAK CABINET.

**£3 10s.**

Democratic in Price.

Noble in every  
Desirable Quality.



ASK YOUR DEALER TO SHOW YOU THE MODEL.

**COLUMBIA** Phonograph Company, Gen'l.,  
ROOM A2, 64 and 66, OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W.  
GLASGOW. SYDNEY.

# SOUTHERN INCURSIONS

by George Frow

If the first months of 1981 were not marked for anything of particular merit in the wide world, apart from the usual state of crisis and gloom, it seemed the time for at least three members of the Society to pack bags and go to the Antipodes.

The first to fly south were Ray and Nancy Phillips of Los Angeles, who paid an overall visit to New Zealand and a limited one to Australia, where they saw the sights and as many collectors as time and distance allowed.

A day or so after their return they very generously entertained my wife and myself, also New Zealand bound, at their home and passed on news of collectors they had met, many of whom we would visit. Through Ray and Nancy's hospitality we were able to meet a number of old and new American collector friends and subsequently see some very fine collections. Some of these friends had travelled a great distance to be with us, and it was an occasion we shall always look back on with affection.

Later, on arrival in New Zealand and meeting several collectors there, we realised that Richard Scott from London was also on a visit to that part of the world and seemed to be travelling ahead by about a week.

Having talked with members of the Antique Phonograph Society of New Zealand, either individually or in gatherings in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, a clearer idea has emerged of the Society there and of the sort of material that is collected and available in the Country; it was first and foremost an opportunity to come face to face with corresponding friends of many years, and what a pleasure that was. I am sure that out of this new establishment of contacts there may be openings at times for projects or liaisons between our two Societies.

On the day that we left New Zealand the Prince of Wales arrived to begin his Tour, and seemed to follow Ray's, Richard's and our courses, but I haven't heard that he was shown any phonographs or gramophones.

## LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

THE FUNNIEST PHONOGRAPH ON EARTH.

Complete in Box, mounted on wooden base, with detachable horn; 1s. post free.

DON'T FAIL TO SEND FOR ONE.

The Twentieth Century Novelty Company,  
1, Cheshire Court,  
Fleet Street. E.C.

This intriguing advertisement appeared in the 'Talking Machine News' in 1906. Can anyone throw any light upon it?



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# Life Among Gramophones

---

by Ted Cunningham

## PART II

In late 1942, rising eleven years of age, I was restored to the bosom of my family in a Southend visibly war-scarred and still blacked-out but surprisingly cheerful and sprightly. I lost no time in buying a gramophone of my own. It was an undistinguished but pleasantly toned four-door cabinet model with cabriole hips, and I got it from a secondhand dealer for £5.0.0d. I paid the money off week by interminable week, earning five bob each Saturday assisting our horse-powered milkman. Oh, the Saturdays I could have spent at home had I known then what I know now about haggling with secondhand dealers.

My vague description of this gramophone may cause irritation to many readers, and I apologise for introducing such imprecision into this learned journal. Unfortunately, although the machine remained my good and hard-working friend for another eight years, I am entirely unable to say who made it, what soundbox it had, or how many springs, if any, drove the motor. In mitigation I can only plead that I was then in the very earliest stages of talking machine fever, and a gramophone was merely (forgive me!) a necessary means towards playing a record. Alas, the disease has since run its inevitable course, but I can claim that only in quite recent years has it blossomed into gramopholic folly. Nowadays I can quote a winding handle's serial number along with the best of you, and often do so, repeatedly, until physically restrained, but I can remember the time when I could take it or leave it alone.

At the time of which I write, my sister was already the proud owner of a Columbia portable, but I took pains to secure my own gramophone for two reasons. Firstly I was dissatisfied with the comparatively strident tone of her open-lid machine. Secondly, and more to the point, she would never allow me to get my hands on it. This portable was the only gramophone I ever encountered which could make people laugh. It evinced a grotesque nervous twitch while being wound up. With each wind the turntable would describe a rotary pitching and tossing motion, reminiscent of a hula-dancer's pelvic action, which somehow had the effect of reducing onlookers to fits of giggles.

My sister, five years my senior, was then enjoying considerable popularity among many of her contemporaries, and from time to time our evenings would be enlivened by large parties of genial if spotty young men, and rather pretty girls wearing perfume which I found strangely disturbing. The Comic Columbia would appear and amid much laughter and chatter there would ensue jitterbugging. Our ground-floor flat (which will be recalled by those who were paying attention in Episode I) was not large and with the black-out curtains closed an intimate atmosphere would quickly prevail. Imagine a dozen excited and happy beagle puppies shut in a telephone box and you will have a picture not far removed from those adolescent thrashes.

I was present at these functions only in a purely menial capacity; taking coats, or handing round particularly nasty wartime pastries, home-made from corn-flakes and golden syrup. These duties once completed it was made clear to me by the management that scruffy kids were not welcome and should scram. Well, it was jolly well not fair, but she needn't have thought I wanted to go to her rotten old parties anyway. For a start there was never anybody for me to dance with, a deficiency it took me some years to rectify. ("When suddenly hastening down the lane..."). Then besides, although I was stimulated by the general air of pimply sophistication and gaiety, I had a strong aversion to the noisy sort of music which was played: The Joe Loss Band, The Squadronaires, and others which included (I swear) the No. 1 Balloon Centre Dance Orchestra. I would therefore retire with dignity to my own room and there listen to my own records, throwing wide the double doors of the gramophone and placing my ear close to the mahogany louvres. My mother would usually take a few aspirins and go to bed.

My taste in music was then leaning towards the lighter classics, guided to some degree by a spate of movies starring people like Anton Walbrook or Charles Boyer in close juxtaposition with the better class of concert-grand piano. My interests were exclusively in orchestral music: the passion for opera which would consume me in years to come was as yet unborn, and chamber music was a term which I did not understand. Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov figured highly in my estimation, and for a time I seriously considered abandoning my plan to be a Spitfire pilot in favour of conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. It even crossed my mind that this choice of career could put me in a position to impose my will on Deanna Durbin, an ambition which had been occupying my thoughts a great deal of late.

I found a good source of secondhand records in a bike-shop at the top of Southend High Street, which I passed each day on my way to and from High School. The going rate was 3d. per record (or in modern terms  $1\frac{1}{4}$ p) so my school dinner money would run to two per day. They never had anything very recent, of course, but if one was willing to spend time dredging through all that quaint Societa Italiana stuff (some kind of language course?) and the dreary operatic rubbish (poor value anyway, since in many cases you only got one side instead of two for your 3d.) it was often possible to come across something not too old by, say Eileen Joyce or Leopold Stokowski. Maybe André Kostelanetz even. I would often chuckle to myself on the way home to think how people could throw away such treasures without recognising them.

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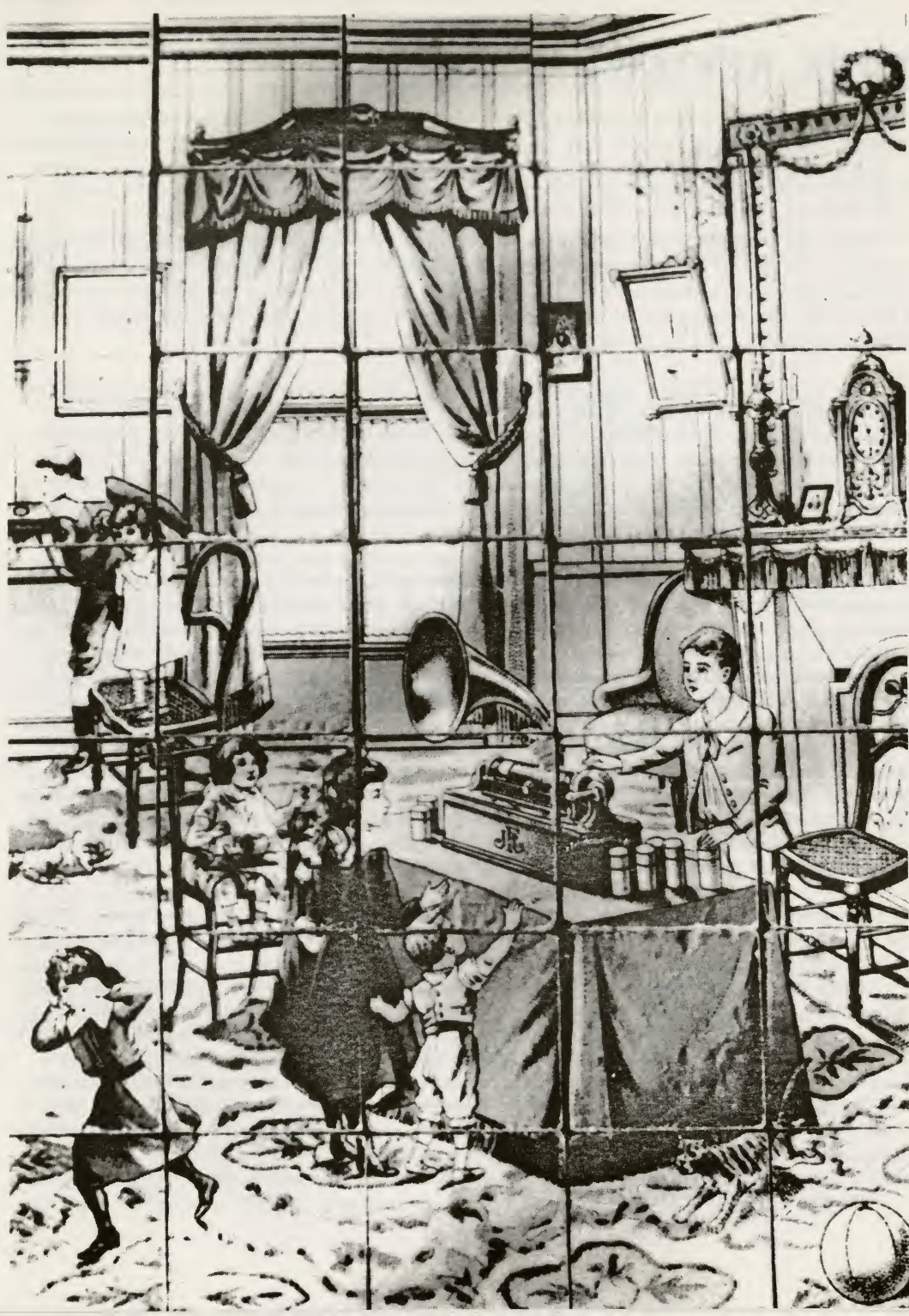
Amsterdam, March 14 1981

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

Recently my son came home with a toy from the beginning of the century; a box of puzzle bricks which have a part of a picture on each side. By putting the bricks together in the right order you can make six pictures. One of the pictures shows a phonograph (see facing page). Does anyone recall playing with such a set of bricks as a child?

Sincerely,  
P. J. Slikker.





## BOOK REVIEWS

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"EDISON BLUE AMBEROL RECORDINGS 1912 - 1914" by Ron Dethlefsen. 208pp. with illustrations. Introduction by Jim Walsh. Published by [redacted] and available from Allen Koenigsberg, [redacted] U.S.A. Limited Edition of 500, numbered and signed.

~~~~~

Time was when Edison Blue Amberol cylinders could be found not only in original cartons, but the earlier numbers with an accompanying descriptive slip. These early numbers are looked on by most collectors as representing the pinnacle of cylinder recording, and nearly all made their appearance within a narrow cleft of two years from November 1912 to December 1914.

The American series cylinders (from nos. 1501 to around 2499) are explored in some detail in this well laid-out and likeable book; after this period the cylinder found itself very much a hanger-on to the Diamond Disc, and henceforth nearly all were dubbed or copied from the Discs, losing much of their brightness and immediacy. Strangely this deterioration seems to have been recognized very quickly by British followers of Edison, resulting in a complaint to him, and a copy of this letter exists in the Society archives.

The story leading to the introduction of the wax Amberols and their later transformation into the celluloid Blues is here told in some detail, and a few production and financial statistics are included. Most usefully, score after score of the record slips are re-created to original type-face, survivors being often too damaged and discoloured to photograph. Although much of their content is slanted towards the composer rather than the performer, it is so easy nowadays to overlook the flourishing sheet music trade of seventy years ago, and any information on writers of those days is welcome. There is at times cause to complain about some of the vacuous statements made in Edison publicity (vide HILLANDALE June 1980, p. 50), but here the slips have been selected for their helpful, and sometimes colourful content; in a number of them all the words of a song or sketch are included. Edisonites will recall that slips were also sent out with early Grand Opera and Concert Blue Amberols, but this 28,000 series is perhaps a topic for a future book.

Sensibly punctuating the slips section are extracts from Edison machine, cylinder or accessory catalogues, with biographies and pictures of most of the artists.

What the compiler sets out to do is to establish firstly the direct recorded cylinders, then compare cylinders and discs with the same material but recorded independently, and thirdly those cylinders are looked at which were first transferred from disc from the end of 1914. Of the last he claims several methods of transfer that were then used, but someone closely connected to the West Orange Laboratory has stated that a horn-to-horn machine, now stored in the basement, was used. The reason for going over to the dubbing process was chiefly due to the need to build up a Diamond Disc catalogue, but a year later in November 1915 consideration was given to reverting to direct recording of cylinders. A costing showed that a change

of policy of duplicating the cylinder masters from disc sub-masters would result in reducing profits by \$12.50 per 1000, and this seems to have tipped the scale against doing anything further about it.

Those who already have the Deakins or Sydney Carter catalogues of Blue Amberols should regard this new book as another dimension to those pure listings, containing as it does so much biographical and technical matter reproduced from contemporary publicity. Happy is the reviewer when such a book as this comes his way.

George Frow.

"ILS ONT INVENTE... LA MACHINE PARLANTE" by Paul Charbon. In French, January 1981, Editions Jean-Pierre Gyss, A4, 207pp., hardback.

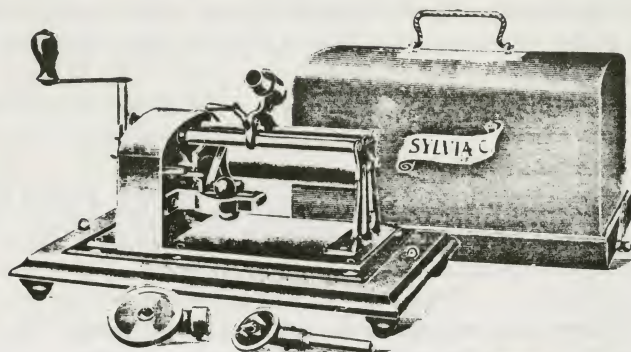
Paul Charbon, from Strasbourg, is a member of a French society dedicated to the 'P. T. T.' - the Postal, Telegraphic and Telephonic services in that country. In his excellent book he attempts to place the invention of the talking machine more clearly in its age, both technically and historically. In his forward he is generous in his praise of those who have gone before him, notably, (to we English readers) Read and Welch, Gelatt and Chew. However, he submits that the shortcomings of these works lie in their various biases and his own work attempts to redress their imbalances as he sees them. It must be said immediately that this is not another revamp of the Was-Cros-or-Edison-First question, and Mr. Charbon gives Edison the lion's share of the narrative, as we might hope and expect. Although new facts emerge about Cros, (not much is left unsaid about Edison), the most interesting chapters, to me at least, were those expanding on the little I **know** about Bell/Tainter, Bettini, Berliner, Leon Scott de Martinville and Henri Lioret. Each of these personalities has a chapter to himself, often with photographs and engravings which we (mercifully) have not seen before. One of the troubles with books on our hobby is a certain sense of 'déjà vu' that comes with having seen the best-known illustrations of phonograph history printed time and time again until we almost feel that we have no more to be shown. Mr. Charbon has obviously dug long and hard to come up with some engravings quite unknown to me and some splendid candid photographs - Cros with Sarah Bernhardt, Bell with the King of Portugal listening to the telephone, the young Berliner with his workshop staff, including the venerable Werner Suess at the age of seventy-five.

Throughout Mr. Charbon is particularly objective, and nowhere more so than in his chapter on Pathé Freres, where he openly admits that the brothers basically invented nothing, but marketed the Graphophone and subsequently their derivations of it with unequalled brilliance.

Of the greatest interest to me, however, were the last chapters on Francois Dus-saud and Valdemar Poulsen respectively. The transition from acoustic to electric

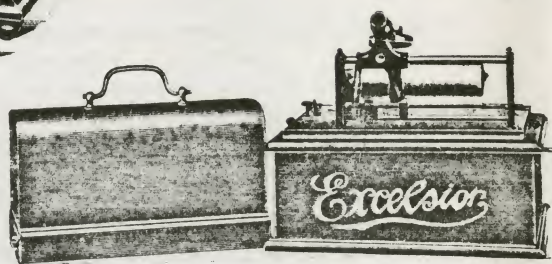
MURDOCHS

MURDOCHS



THE "SYLVIA" C.

The "SYLVIA" Phonograph for which MURDOCH & Co. have sold so far, has already given great satisfaction. The many improvements in the "New 100" Model have already met with appreciation from the trade, who find it has wonderful selling qualities. One of the many improvements in the "New 100" is the top winding crank which takes the place of the ordinary side key, so that the machine can be more easily wound. The reproduction is full, clear, and remarkably natural. The entire instrument is highly polished, nickel mounted on a wood base with bent satin wood cover, and forms a handsome combination. We have had many valuable expressions of opinion regarding the high value of this new machine, and some of our customers are good enough to say that it is the best they have seen before, but that the price is only slightly in advance of last season's model, owing to the many improvements and the increased cost of materials. The machine is now on hand in the "SYLVIA" before you in a handsome box of nearest London appearance. We are selling only.



THE "EXCELSIOR."

This is one of the most remarkable features. Machines introduced this season. It is perfect in every detail, and yet is sold at a very low price, within the reach of all. It has three horns, but with perfectly silent motion, and runs through two records at one winding. The reproduction is specially made for this machine, and is recognised as a masterpiece at the price. It grows flower like, 12 1/2 inches high, and is supplied with each "Excelsior" machine, showing its power of tone for next delivery on a few days. The first of the supply was exhausted within few hours, which is distinct evidence of the value given.

JOHN G. MURDOCH

UNIVERSAL TALKING MACHINE

91 & 93, FARRINGTON ROAD

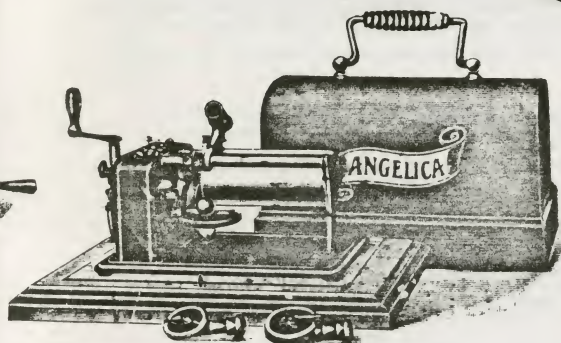
MURDOCHS

MURDOCHS

FOUR SAFE LINES

FOR THE DEALER
AND THE
PUBLIC.

FOR
UES:
on Talking
ices."
Accessories."



THE "ANGELICA."

The "Angelica" for which MURDOCH & Co. have sole control, has many excellent improvements this season, to ensure rapid sales. For a moderately priced machine, it cannot be beaten, renowned as it is for perfect reproduction and durability. "Angelica" very rarely get out of order. This season's model has the new crank wheel.

"La FAVORITA."

The "La Favorita" will come as a revelation to the Phonograph enthusiast. There is absolutely nothing like it at the price on the market. It represents the last word in phonographs. Early investigation is advised.



& Co., LTD.,

SOLE PROVIDERS,
ROAD, LONDON, E.C.


MURDOCHS

recording is a very murky area in most collectors' minds, which seems to be written off simply because the acoustic era is all they claim to be interested in - but the seeds of electrical recording were sown before Nipper was painted, and Dussaud is photographed speaking electrically on to a cylinder in 1894. Mr. Charbon touches on the allied subjects of telephony, telegraphy and sound synchronisation with film envisaged by Dussaud in one form in 1897. The chapter on Poulsen marks the entry into the age of electricity, but it is interesting to note that in both his adherence to the cylinder upon which to record and his work on the improvement of the telegraphic repeater (pointing towards the wire recorder and eventually the tape recorder), how similarly his work and Edison's progressed and thus how much more quickly the world might have had these inventions had they received the financial backing that Edison enjoyed.

Throughout the book Mr. Charbon slips in the names of dozens of lesser-known inventors, workers and financiers who helped along talking machine history. Inevitably for a first edition odd captions are misconstrued and there are odd mis-spellings but these are of little consequence and certainly not caused by any lax scholarship. However, there is one delightful Freudian slip which I feel I must mention. The list of acknowledgements at the beginning of the book is printed in alphabetical order and starts with..... Emil Bayly of Bournemouth.....

H.H.

(Available for 148 French Francs, packed and posted from:
Amis de l'histoire des P. T. T. de l'Alsace,


France.)

London W.2.
April 23 1981

Dear Christopher,

Re the first point in the new series 'Points and Queries', on Page 202, National Band portables were wholesaled, and possibly manufactured, by Thomson, Diamond and Butcher, the Tottenham Court Road radio and electrical factors. I believe they were taken over by the Rank Group over twenty years ago.

Sincerely,

Barry Raynaud.

Well, I hadn't realised 'Points and Queries' was a series, but it could well be, and let's be having some more informative answers to queries. Does anyone know when T,D and B started selling National Band portables? - Ed.

London Meeting

February

DAVE ROBERTS: TEN YEARS IN THE LIFE OF A "COLLECTO-MANIAC".

The object of the programme was to illustrate the pleasures and some of the pitfalls Dave had encountered during the past ten years while building up his collection of machines. Eleven of the latter were used as illustrations - one for each year plus one to represent his childhood interest in gramophones and records.

He described where each machine was obtained and mentioned the difficulties involved in transporting some of them home by public transport. Among several anecdotes was a story of the amusement caused when a 4'6" horn was nursed on the laps of three commuters in a crowded Portsmouth train, there being no floor space available. This was one of several items Dave had to carry home from Christie's in 1973.

He went on to describe his various activities at the exhibitions during the Centenary year, and the way his lifestyle has changed since he started to deal with the despatch of the Society's publications. The programme concluded with a demonstration for which Dave has achieved some notoriety, in which two copies of 'The Miner's Dream of Home' were played simultaneously, on a Triumph and a Fireside.

Other machines demonstrated were:

HMV 101 with weak spring (Life get's tejus don't it!, P. L. Hayes) - used to illustrate a childhood memory when Dave had to turn records by hand after a mainspring had broken.

Edison Standard (Combination) (Summer Recollections, A Benzler) 1971

Edison Home with 2'6" brass horn (The Lost Chord) 1972

Trade Mark Gramophone (March from Tannhauser) 1973

Edison Triumph with Cygnet horn (Special G, I'm Looking for a Sweetheart) 1974

Mikiphone (Jack Payne's Memories) 1975

Monarch Gramophone 1912 (Trio from Faust, Zonophone) 1976

Junior Monarch 1903 (In a Cellar Cool, Stormont) 1977

Morris Paramount cylinder (on Standard) 1978

HMV hornless 1913 (World Record speed controller demonstrated) 1978

Edison Home with repeater (I am a Roamer, Dawson) 1979

Edison Fireside with blue floral horn (Bye, Bye, Blackbird) 1980.

Thanks were extended to Len Watts, who supplied the transport to and from Woking, thus relieving Dave of any more embarrassing encounters on Southern Electric, where big horns do not mix well with briefcases.

Incidentally, the Editor's gramophonic life also began with a 101 with a broken mainspring, and all that turning records by hand didn't half make for sore fingers....

"Echo" DISC

Records Your
Voice



DIRECTIONS

Place an Echo Disc on the turn table of your phonograph. Use a loud steel phonograph needle - - and a megaphone. Then sing or talk into the horn of sound chamber keeping the megaphone close to the phonograph - - that's all. You will immediately hear your voice by replaying the Disc without changing the needle.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ECHO DISC

It is one of the greatest novelties ever produced in many years. It affords an unlimited opportunity for home entertainment and amusement. - - All as children can make a record of the voice. - - Singing, Reciting, etc. - - all record perfectly.

AMUSEMENT FOR VISITORS

When visitors are at your home amuse them with Echo Discs. You'll have more laughs with these than can be imagined.

SEND A MESSAGE TO FRIENDS OR RELATIVES

Just think how your relatives or friends would like if they received a spoken message in your own or your child's voice on an Echo Disc.



A DUET SINGLE HANDED

You can produce vocal duet alone by repeating the same part of the record by changing your voice slightly.

BIRTHDAY OR ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS

You can now send your message of congratulations or birthday greetings in your own voice through the mail which can be preserved as a keepsake.

Echo Disc

Toronto, Ontario
March 8 1981

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

I read with interest the article in the last issue of Hillandale on the Speakeasie Home recorder. Early methods of recording (pre-tape and non-wax cylinder) intrigue me and I thought you might be interested in an unusual item which has recently come my way. It is a small 6-inch disc made entirely of metal. Labelled 'Echo Disc - Records Your Voice', it was distributed by the Plaza Music Company of New York, which is associated mainly with the Banner label. Both sides of the record bear exactly the same label (see photos), and fortunately the original paper jacket was still present, and so the tantalizing information on the label that one could record one's own voice with this disc is explained in the detailed instruction: "Place an Echo Disc on the turntable. . . . " I tried it on an upright, first playing both sides straight through on the offchance that there might be something of interest already recorded, and, like a modern tape, following the instructions would have erased it.

I heard only a very low babble of voices, totally indecipherable, likely caused by being recorded over many times. Then I placed the disc on the turntable of an outside horn machine, started it going and shouted down the horn, "Mary had a little lamb" - no less, why not? On playing it back I heard only the original voices coming through as garbled as ever, but not my shouts. So, like a worn out tape, it appears to have had its day. I would be interested to know if anyone has had better luck with a less well-used Echo Disc. I cannot imagine the result would be very startling.

The two US patent numbers on the label set me searching for the heyday of the Echo Disc. The first Patent number, 1,421,045 was filed on March 13 1918 and issued on June 27 1922. The title of the Patent: Process for recording sound records. It was taken out by Henry L. Wadsworth, Lexington, Mass., assignor to Metal Recording Disc Company Inc., N.Y. It reads: An original record tablet comprising a metallic base with a wax-like film thereon, and a reproducible record groove scratched in the metal. The second Patent was filed on April 25th 1921 and issued on February 13th 1923. Its title: Record for talking machines and method for making the same, and in this case it was taken out by Victor H. Emerson, New York, also on behalf of Metal Recording Disc Company Inc. It reads: A sound record blank having in a surface thereof a relatively broad and shallow stylus guiding groove. I was unable to find any information on the Metal Recording Disc Company.

"Singing, reciting, laughing - all record perfectly". It would be interesting to determine what kind of a vogue Echo Discs had, if any, before its inevitable and no doubt speedy demise. I cannot believe that it would have achieved any serious interest. It represents another instance of exaggerated claims in the phonograph industry, a situation all too often observed from the beautifully artistic but implausible assert-

ions in the phonograph advertisements of the day.

Sincerely,
Bill Pratt.

The same system was marketed in Great Britain by British Kodisk Ltd, under licence from Metal Disc. The trade mark 'Kodisk' was originally sub-titled 'Snapshots of your voice'. This obvious attempt to cash in on the popularity of the Kodak system of snapshot photography did not meet with Kodak's approval, and the words had to be changed to 'Hear yourself as others hear you' and a disclaimer included on the possible Kodak connection. The accompanying reproduction of a Kodisk envelope shows this, with one of the original 'snapshot' record labels. The cardboard megaphone in my possession has both slogans - the early one on the inside. Clearly, rather than scrap all their stocks of cardboard megaphones (which retailed for 6d.), the Company re-cycled the banned stocks by turning them inside out! The discs, incidentally, are quite heavy, and are presumably made of a lead-based alloy. They cost 2/6d each, and special needles were free. What was special about them is not made clear, at least in a 1923 advertisement I have to hand, but probably it was not very much, as the Echo-Disc appears to have been content with ordinary gramophone needles.

-Ed.

KODISK
TRADE MARK

"Hear yourself as others hear you."

READ OTHER SIDE CAREFULLY

READ OTHER SIDE CAREFULLY

KODISK
SNAPSHOTS OF YOUR VOICE
PATENTS TRADE MARK APPLIED FOR
BRITISH KODISK LTD
LONDON
MADE IN ENGLAND
DISC CO. LTD
LONDON
PATENTS PENDING

For recording on a Columbia Gramophone, open the shutters, squeeze the large end of the megaphone between the hand and the you can and keep your mouth right inside the megaphone.

For recording on a Gramophone, simply to shove open the door and place your megaphone in the slot and keep your mouth right inside the megaphone.

BRITISH KODISK LTD.
LONDON, W.

No connection whatever with Kodak Ltd. P.T.O.

The Editor presents his apologies for the poor quality of this reproduction of a Kodisk record jacket. The two slogans are both apparent however, on the record label and on the jacket respectively.

London Meeting

March 1981

MICHAEL WALTERS: MYSELF AND G + S.

The theme of Michael Walters' talk was early recording artists associated with the Savoy operas, whether or not they were recorded in such parts. The talk opened with some personal reminiscences and we heard how an aunt, fond of records (mostly Galli-Curci and Harry Lauder) had introduced him to the gramophone and how, hearing *The Mikado* on the radio, he had become interested in the Savoy Operas.

The recital started with Henry Lytton singing *The Lord High Executioner*, followed by one of the HMV 'Key' records that used to be supplied to dealers; this one, of course, consisted entirely of excerpts from Gilbert and Sullivan. A creator's record (transferred to l. p.) was then played: *A More Humane Mikado*, sung by Richard Temple. There had been some doubt about the correct speed of the original, and two different l. p. transfers were played, with quite different choices of pitch.

George Grossmith had been involved in G + S productions, but was one of the artists who had not recorded anything from the operas, and we accordingly had a record of *You Can Dance*, from *No, No Nanette*. Walter Passmore, on the other hand, had recorded several G + S items, and we heard him in the *Policeman's Song*. Ruth Vincent had once walked out on G + S, and had not recorded anything, but we heard her in *Eva dell'Acqua's Villanelle*. Similarly, Jessie Reeve had not recorded anything from the Savoy Operas, but we heard her singing *Sullivan's Orpheus* with his Lute.

As a diversion, an American recording of the *Pirates* was put on, and we heard the Major-General's song. Edith Evans (soprano, not the late actress) had been in the 1910 revival of *Ivanhoe*, and her record of the *Chosen Race* was played. Claud Fleming was in the 1909 revival of *Fallen Fairies*, but he had made only three recordings in 1920. We heard one of these, *Here's to Those we Love*, from *A Southern Maid*. Sylvia Cecil and Sidney Pointer were two more who had not recorded any G + S: we heard Pointer in *Romberg's Desert Song*.

Henry Milledge was in some of the acoustic G + S sets for HMV, and we heard a song from *The Rose of Persia*. Finally, Lily Briarcliff, basically a soubrette, had been in G + S and we heard her record of *Cheerily Carols the Lark*, from *Ruddigore*.

Our thanks to Michael Walters for an entertaining, well-researched and varied programme.

L. W.

April 1981

GORDON BROMLY: THE HMV HISTORICAL CATALOGUE, Part II.

This programme was a follow-on from John Mckeown's at the January meeting,

concentrating on the operatic content of the Historical Catalogue. Some singers had recorded only 'just in time', being rather past their prime when recording became a practicable commercial proposition. One such was Tamagno, a powerful tenor, who created the role of Verdi's Otello. He died in 1905, but had made several records shortly before; these he insisted were sold at £1 each, with a special green label. We heard three of his recordings, from later pressings on the red Historic label; DR100, the Esultate and Niun mi tema, both from Otello, and DR105, Deserto sulla terra from Il Trovatore.

Adelina Patti was another singer recorded just in time. The Gramophone Co. had been obliged to take their recording apparatus and staff to Wales in 1905 and await the great lady's pleasure. She evidently was eventually captivated by the recording machine, for she made some twenty-eight records. She was then 63. We heard her rendering of Bishop's Home Sweet Home. Mattia Battistini's tremendous baritone voice was next heard, in Eri tu from Verdi's Ballo in Maschera. This was DB200. Battistini was also allotted a distinctive label, in bright orange.

Some singers, of course, were young in the early years of recording. Caruso was one of these, and we heard one of his March 1902 recordings, 52345, which remained as a single-sided disc (one of very few) until near the end of the 78 era. Then a 1904 record of Leoncavallo's Mattinata, with the composer at the piano, was played; this was one of Caruso's last European recordings, later ones being made by Victor in America. We heard DA561, Ora e per sempre addio from Otello, a role he never sang on stage.

Towards the end of the thirties some electrically recorded items had been placed in the historic list and we heard DB 987, Melba and John Brownlee in an aria from Traviata. From the earlier days again, we had two pieces from Fernando de Lucia; Se il mio nome from The Barber of Seville (single-sided 2-52667, never doubled) and DB 368, E il sol dell'anima from Rigoletto. Then a superb rendering of Mozart by John McCormack: Il mio tesoro from Don Giovanni on DB 324, and this was followed by a soprano noted for extremely long trills, Selma Kurz (her name is German for short!) in Saper vorreste from Ballo in Maschere. The deep French bass Pol Plancon sang the lovely O Isis and Osiris from The Magic Flute on DB 657 and Edmund Clement and Geraldine Farrar were heard in a duet from Gounod's Romeo and Juliet on DB 172.

The great Russians were not overlooked, and we heard Dmitri Smirnoff in an aria from Sorotchinsky Fair on DB 753 and Leonid Sobinoff in a piece from Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin on DB 889.

The recital ended with a rousing trio from Rossini's William Tell. This was Troncar suoi di quell'empico (DK120), sung by Martinelli, Luca and Mardones.

The Chairman expressed thanks to Gordon at the close for providing so interesting an evening, giving us the chance to hear some rare records and including explanatory notes from an enthusiast well acquainted with recorded vocal art. L. W.

Mackinaw, Ill.
USA
March 15th.

Dear Christopher,

Please forgive the very long delay in replying to Mr. Cosens 3 July 1980 comments on my article which appeared in the June Hillandale.

Mr. Cosens is correct in saying that harder record materials demand harder styli. However, this comment, as Mr. Cosens points out, makes the assumption that the technology exists to provide a well-shaped and polished stylus. It would be interesting to research when Edison had perfected his method of lapping diamond styli to match that of his method for finishing sapphire styli. I make the comment because Mr. Cosens states, "The only reason diamond was not used from the beginning was probably that of cost." There could be a host of other reasons besides cost that diamonds were not used initially:

- (a) Lapping to an exact profile - diamond v. sapphire.
- (b) Amount of stress v. hardness of material for diamond v. sapphire - for mounting of the stylus and the amount of pressure on the stylus by the floating weight.
- (c) Processing time and reject rate in production of one material over another.
- (d) Availability of natural v. synthetic materials. Synthetic sapphires became available in the early part of this century, but synthetic diamonds not until **the middle** of the century. I do not know, however, if Edison ever used synthetic gem stones.

Please forgive my mistake with the resonance formula; the correct expression is given below.

When a thin circular plate is rigidly clamped at its rim, its fundamental frequency is given by

$$f = 0.47 \frac{T}{a^2} \sqrt{\frac{Y}{\rho(1-\sigma^2)}}$$

↑
one

T = thickness of plate
a = radius of plate
p = density of plate
Y = Young's modulus
 σ = Poisson's ratio for the material of the plate
f = fundamental frequency of resonance.

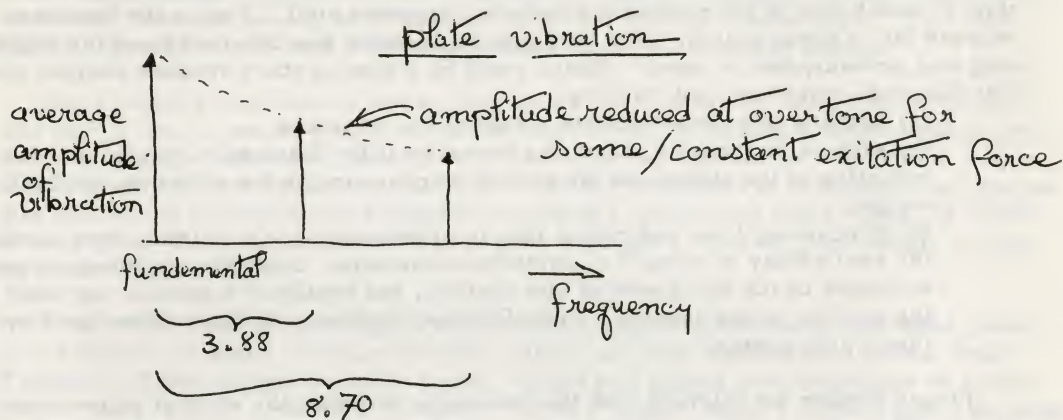
The transverse vibrations of thin plates or diaphragms result from the elastic restoring forces produced when their surfaces are deformed. The natural modes of vibration of such plates are involved functions of boundary shape and dimensions, whether the boundaries are free to vibrate or are rigidly clamped, and the elastic properties of its material.

When vibrating in the fundamental mode f, the entire surface of the plate moves

in phase with a maximum amplitude at its centre. The first and second overtone modes of vibration have frequency ratios of 3.88 and 8.70 to the fundamental. When the plate is vibrating in these latter modes, one or more nodal circles are present in which the plate is oppositely displaced on adjacent sides of the circles. The average displacement of the plate's surface under these conditions is small because of cancellations between the oppositely-phased circular sectors.

Sincerely yours,

~~Electrical~~
John C. Fesler
Engineer



IF THOSE LIPS COULD ONLY SPEAK.....

The advertisement opposite, and that on Page 206, both appeared in the November 1907 issue of 'Sound Wave'. Clearly "If those lips" was the song of the month, with the two leading companies in hot pursuit of an eager buying public, but how similar the two advertisements are! I think the Columbia version is definitely the more successful as an advertisement - about the records I will not comment, since I have no copy of one, and do not know where, if at all, I have one of the other!

The Murdoch's advertisement on the centre pages, incidentally, dates from the same year, and shows three Excelsior-based machines and one Thorens type (Sylvia).

ZONO HITS ARE ALWAYS THE BEST



In the opinion of all the leading factors the best Zono record yet made is "If those lips could only speak," by that tried and popular artiste, Herbert Payne (with orchestra and bells).

Go into any shop where ZONOS are sold and compare it with those of any other Makes.

Lifting the Veil

This was the title of a talk given at the Recorded Vocal Art Society on March 31st. by Ron Bishop. Barry Raynaud went along, as did several other C. L. P. G. S. members, and sent us the following report.

Ron Bishop began by explaining that because early discs and cylinders had so many variables, much is lost in their reproduction if no attempt is made to correct them or compensate for them. Between makes the variations included groove width, basic recording characteristic and speed, which can vary from 66 to 100 r.p.m. Centre-start Pathé discs were looked at first, and it was immediately apparent how important is the correct approach to reproduction. His method is to tailor the circuit design to the characteristics of the recording horns and apparatus used, rather than just compensating for them. For example, the bass cut-off is calculated from known flare-rate and mouth dimensions. Results are impressive. On the subject of early Pathé and Fonotipia discs, he maintains that in both cases the Italian product was far superior to the French.

About 1914, Pathé rationalised the speed, to about 78 r.p.m. (80 r.p.m. ? - Ed.) and rim-starting came in not long afterwards. Surface noise was also improved; on discs, and to a less extent on cylinders, this fell in the same band-width as the human voice. This is an unfortunate coincidence, as it makes it difficult to eliminate the noise without destroying some of the vocal quality. However, by 1922 recordings were being made, of which the best compared favourably with the electrics of five and six years later.

Turning next to lateral-cut discs, Ron Bishop maintained that these are inferior to the vertical-cut type, as he claims amongst other defects that they have more pronounced resonances. He suggests that bass must be cut on recording to avoid grooves running into each other. (The writer does not endorse this view; surely, if comparable levels were applied to vertical cut recordings, the cutter would alternately cut too deep and then too shallow, or jump from the wax altogether? However, it must be agreed that tracing distortion (pinch effect) is a problem towards the centre of any lateral-cut record). With good equipment, tracking distortion is a much less serious problem in either case.

The first lateral disc played was a U.S. Victor - which to the writer seemed as good as or better than the hill-and-dales. The signal-to-noise ratio appeared better, the inter-modulation distortion less, and the frequency range similar. Then came Columbia and HMV records - and spoiling due to 'steeling' was noticed. Later, it was stressed that the correct stylus must be used at all times for any disc or cylinder. There is no compromise! It is critical.

A note here about the equipment used. This was a Quad amplifier and pre-amp;
230

a Strathclyde Developments turntable (with variable speed able to cope with the entire range mentioned), modified Pickering cartridges with special styli fitted, and a collection of special filters, the details of which were not given. All was loaned by Gordon Bromly.

After refreshments, the question of room acoustics was raised: this too is important and must be taken into account. The hall at the Bloomsbury Institute is more 'live' than a typical living room with its usual soft furnishings. Some had found in the earlier part that the sound was too high in the treble. The writer was not so troubled, which shows how subjective are views on the quality of sound reproduction.

When it came to Edison, we heard a Blue Amberol and a Diamond Disc. Generally these had good surfaces, but at one stage the Company bought back worn or unwanted discs from customers for 10c. to grind down and re-use. In theory this was a good idea (one pressing plant today re-cycles bad pressings), but in practice it was not successful and was eventually discontinued.¹ With the cylinders, one main advantage was the constant linear speed; on a 12-inch record the ratio from start to finish is nearly 4:1.²

The Diamond Disc was of good technical quality, but often had music of poor cultural standard. Edison, himself a genius to whom we owe many technical discoveries besides sound recording, seemed to have little artistic intellect. "I'll take you home again, Kathleen" was his favourite; in fact, he started the whole business with a nursery rhyme.

We turned briefly to electrically-recorded discs. These are obviously easier to reproduce because the recording characteristics were better controlled, or 'smoother', and were later published as 'label' or industry standards. Also, groove-size was less variable, and processing much improved. The last examples were Victor fine-groove discs, of the late 1930s and 40s. The surfaces were superb, but they do need considerable bass-boost as their turn-over frequency is about an octave higher than contemporary European discs. In fact, these surfaces (shellac) were nearly as good as modern plastic l. p. s. All these splendid discs were the property of Geoff Lyles.

Inevitably, time did not allow every aspect of such a diverse subject to be covered in a single talk. One would like to hear more on such topics as reproduction from metal plates, circuits for compensation and filters. An interesting, entertaining evening.

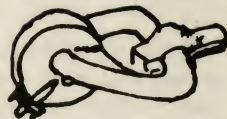
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<sup>1</sup> One wonders how laminated records such as the Diamond Discs could successfully be recycled. Shellac discs, and wax cylinders, were often returnable for melting down, but not the Columbia New Process records. - Ed.

<sup>2</sup> The later Blue Amberols, of course, were dubbed from Diamond Discs, so that this advantage was lost. - Ed.

## DOUBLE SIDED SOUNDBOX

Dennis Holloway, of Stalbridge in Dorset, is hoping that someone will be able to identify a curious soundbox he has recently acquired; my sketch is as dreadful as sketches can be, but it may give some idea of the general format. Both sides of the diaphragm are enclosed (although there must be a gap round the stylus bar, so the front chamber will not be airtight) and the two outlet tubes join at the pivot on the arm. There is no name on it, and it looks to me to be of diecast construction. Does anyone have a gramophone with such a soundbox fitted?



Mr. Holloway is also wondering if there are other members living in his area who might be interested in forming a new branch. How about it, all you in Dorset?

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PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY (Founded 1919).

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